Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

Col. Wright, United States Commissioner of Labor, admits that "it is probably true that the time has arrived when every person in the United States who desires remunerative employment cannot find it." Five hundred thousand people, he says, "must compete for four hundred thousand places."

"The cry of cheap money and enough of it turns out on examination to be hollow," says "Today." But nothing could possibly be more hollow and superficial than "Today's" examination. The writer, too, seems to be unaware of the fact that even Senator Sherman, the greatest "authority" on finance in Congress, and such organs as the New York "Financial Chronicle" admit the imperative need of an increase in the volume of currency. More attention to facts would compel a revision of his theories.

The editor of the "Jeffersonian" is a supporter of the paternalistic "People's Party," and an advocate of the single-tax and of government money. In a recent issue of his paper I found the following remarks, which are strangely out of harmony with his general theory and practice: "There are bad governments and worse and better governments, but there has been and never can be such a thing as a good government. 'A good government' is a contradiction in terms, equivalent to good evil. Men never seek to exercise powers of government unless they intend to abuse such power, and power never comes to those who do not seek it."

Referring to the efforts of Col. Shepard and the fanatical old women of both sexes to commit the World's Fair managers to the policy of Sunday closing, Chicago "Unity" says: "We shall be sorry to see the wishes of Col. Shepard, Dr. Patton, and the rest prevail in this question of the use of the World's Fair on Sunday, but if they do meet with success, their timeliness and watchful care of a principle they believe to be sacred and second in importance to no other, will have merited the victory." If Col. Shepard should advocate the lynching of all Freethinkers or infidels, would "Unity" think that any amount of devotion, zeal, and persistence could merit the victory? The principle is the same in both cases.

Alluding to the remark of a Republican organ that every graduate of Amherst is expected to vote for the Massachusetts Republican candidate for governor, who is a graduate of that college, the Boston "Herald" says that "it is a poor tribute to pay to the intelligence of a college graduate to assume that his horizon does not extend beyond his own alma mater." But we have the "Herald's" own authority for the statement that most Harvard graduates vote with the Republicans, the explanation being that such graduates are the sons of rich men and most of the rich men of the country are Republicans. If this is true, then manifestly no tribute is too poor or unjust to the intelligence of our college graduates, whose reason for supporting this or that party is no better than that of the illiterate farmer.

"Max Eliot," writing from London to the Boston "Herald" about the exploits and practices of American journalists abroad, finds ample justification for the contempt in which these gentry are held. "It is really deplorable to contemplate the absolute lack of truth in many of the communications that find their way into print in American newspapers," she says. "They are too seldom to be relied upon," and "the life and habits of the usual American newspaper man in London is about as vapid and frivolous, apparently, as any life devoid of honorable and dignified aims can be." But is not "Max Eliot" guilty of making "invidious distinctions"? Are home reporters any better, — have *they*, as a rule, honorable and dignified aims in life? And, going a little higher, do we find the life and habits of the average editorial writer worthy of admiration? Sincerity and elevation of sentiment are incompatible with the objects and methods of most newspapers; and, as only the fit survive in the competitive struggle in the literary market, it is natural that those who are not hampered by any scruples and regard for lofty standards should win the prizes, and that those who find it difficult to adapt themselves to the conditions imposed by the counting room should fail. Journalists who have honorable aims or high ideals do not achieve distinction as journalists. They may be thinkers, philosophers, students, but they do not shine in journalism. They make a living by journalism, but they have no ambitions in that direction, and devote their leisure to science or reform. The demand is for men adept in misrepresentation, distortion, artful dodging, and invention; and the supply naturally follows the demand. Perhaps things are different in England, as "Max Eliot" affirms. If so, we can only envy the English people and congratulate both the readers and the writers.

Spencer or Rights.

A word is needed to express the liberties deducible from the law of justice. So much is conceded by Mr. Tucker and his correspondent, Mr. Simpson. But they take exception to the term rights, which is the one Mr. Spencer supplies. In selecting and proposing this term, Mr. Spencer follows his fruitful method of penetrating to the bottom truths in the popular creeds and watchwords and evolving a synthetic definition upon which all disputants might agree. In the Spencerian reconciliation of science and religion, and in the reconciliation of the position of those who believe in absolute equality and the position of those who deny equality, we find analogues to the attempt, in "Justice," to furnish a term acceptable to all who profess love for liberty and equity. In no case is Mr. Spencer guilty of any inversion of the usual terminology, while in every case he guides us to an intelligent and wholly proper use of the terms which are generally used unintelligently and with but partial propriety.

As to the matter of rights. After establishing the law of equal liberty, he goes on to show in what sense it may be said that men have rights. "Whoever admits that each man must have a certain restricted freedom, asserts that it is *right* he should have this restricted freedom. If it be shown to follow, now in this case and now in that, that he is free to act up to a certain limit but not beyond it, then the implied admission is that it is *right* he should have the particular freedom so defined. And hence the several particular freedoms deducible may fitly be called, as they commonly are called, his *rights*." In other words, the laws of life having imposed on us certain conditions which we *must* observe in order to secure happiness, — equal liberty being "the fundamental essential to stable social life," — it follows that it is right, proper, fit, becoming, and in harmony with the natural laws or facts, that each of us should be allowed to enjoy those freedoms without which happiness is impossible. Some people, it is true, trace their rights, not to great facts and verities of life and development, but to some divine law of a superior being supposed to regulate this life and all life. But the philosophical differences should not prevent the common use of the term rights, the meaning of which remains substantially the same whether used with reference to natural fact or divine will.

Mr. Tucker, however, protests against the Spencerian use of the term rights. (I cannot deal with Mr. Simpson's objection, since he does not tell us *why* he dislikes the term rights.) "The word right," he says, "except in the strictly legal sense, conveys the idea of a high prerogative independent of contract and superior to it." Now, "prerogative" being defined as high, exclusive privilege, I cannot admit that the word right conveys any such idea. Nobody believes in or defends high and exclusive privileges nowadays; and everybody either declares or feels that the admirable aphorism, "Either all men have equal rights, or none have any," is self-evidently true. There is really no controversy as to equality of rights. The controversy is entirely as to equality of possessions. No man asserts his rights without asserting the equal rights of all other men. To give force to his objection, Mr. Tucker will have to *prove* that right conveys the idea of a high and exclusive privilege. This, I am confident, he will find an impossible task.

But while I deny that right conveys the idea of a prerogative, I freely admit that right does convey the idea of something superior to contract and independent of it. This, however, is as it should be. Rights *are* superior to, and independent of, contract. The formula of equal liberty, says Mr. Tucker, is a scientific statement the truth of which cannot be confirmed or altered by any contract whatsoever. That scientific statement is a statement of the rights which properly belong to us, not by virtue of any contract, but under the laws of nature and life. From the law of equal liberty it *does* follow that all men are under obligations to each other, — that is, that all men have rights. Right and obligation are purely ethical terms. The science of ethics postulates the desire of men for happiness, and since men cannot be happy unless they respect the principles of equal liberty, they are, ethically, *obliged* to respect each other's rights. Ethically, Robin Hood was bound to respect the rights of his fellows, Magna Charta or no Magna Charta. There are men who choose to disregard ethical considerations; they are known as criminals; Robin Hood was one of them. But because these refuse to respect our rights, it does not follow that we are without any. Because the condition of equal liberty does not exist, because the law is not fully observed and carried out, it does not follow that we have no rights. We have rights, but they are not accorded full recognition. Some day equal liberty will be duly observed, and then we shall enjoy the rights to which we are entitled from the ethical point of view.

It is incorrect to say that Spencer terms those "privileges and immunities" rights which men who adopt and respect equal liberty enjoy. Those individual claims which must be respected in order to insure social happiness are what Spencer terms individual rights. Whether they *are* respected or not, matters not. The wages of sin is misery, and men gradually learn to respect these claims or rights, — they gradually discover that they are under obligations to each other. Of course equal liberty as a condition, as a practical fact, "does not exist until men create it by contract or by practical consent." That is to say, we do not enjoy that which we ought to enjoy, that which it is right and fit that we should enjoy, until men refrain from aggression and come to render each other his due. But what has the fact to do with the ethical question of what our due is?

I deem Spencer's use of the word rights eminently proper, because it reveals the true meaning of rights to those who are misled by the false meanings which disguise it, and because it is the only correct and philosophical use of the word. The term is too valuable and important to be surrendered to those who abuse it through ignorance of the law of justice. Certainly those who have dared to adhere to the term Anarchism, the prejudice against which among the learned as well as the unlearned was much stronger and much more reasonable, cannot refuse to admit the term rights. A word is needed to express the liberties deducible from the law of justice, and it is my firm belief that no better word than rights can be found.

V. Y.

Liberty.

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BOSTON, MASS., SEPTEMBER 26, 1891.

"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

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Announcement.

Early in October I shall move from my present office at 45 Milk Street, which is a small third-story room, into a large, commodious store on Tremont Street, one of Boston's principal thoroughfares. These new quarters are on the ground floor and have a fine window frontage. The front portion of the premises will be utilized as the headquarters of my general publishing business, as the offices of Liberty and the "Weekly Bulletin," and, in addition, as a retail book store.

The rear and larger portion will be fitted up as a reading-room, in which a greater number of newspapers and periodicals will be kept on file than is to be found in any other reading-room in the United States. Besides the usual list of monthlies and weeklies, nearly every daily paper of any importance published in this country will be included; and England, France, Germany, and other countries will be well represented. It is needless to say that liberal and radical papers will be a specialty. This room will be open to the public every week-day from nine o'clock in the morning till ten o'clock in the evening at an admission fee of five cents. Those desiring to use the room regularly will be able to enjoy that privilege by becoming subscribers and paying fifty cents a month or five dollars a year. To subscribers the room will be open on Sundays, and to others if the State is willing.

I hope to issue the next number of Liberty from 224 Tremont Street, where all friends of liberty will be received with especial cordiality.

BENJ. R. TUCKER.

"Obligation? To Whom? To What?"

In another column Mr. Yarros defends Mr. Spencer against my recent words of caution regarding his use of the word rights. In answer thereto I have but few words to say.

In the second paragraph of his article Mr. Yarros gives us Mr. Spencer's argument. The argument is based upon the assumption that "each man must have a certain restricted freedom." I need not consider the argument, because I do not admit the assumption. Indeed, I expressly deny it. I regard this restricted freedom as a means to an end; but suppose I do not desire the end? In that case this restricted freedom does not present itself to me as a necessity. The end here referred to is society, not happiness. Some men find their happiness outside of society, and to them equal freedom, though an essential of society, is not the condition of happiness. The phrase, "those freedoms without which happiness is impossible," involves an unwarranted assumption.

The criticism offered in Mr. Yarros's third paragraph is of the kind usually indulged in by "smart Alecks." It is based upon another unwarranted assumption, — namely, that the only definition of the word prerogative is "high exclusive privilege." If Mr. Yarros will consult the dictionary, he will find another definition: "prior and indefeasible right." The very word, then, that is interchangeable with right in the sense of something superior to contract. I consulted the dictionary before I used the word, and knew what I was talking about. The "impossible task" of "proving that right conveys the idea of a high and exclusive privilege" does not rest on my shoulders.

The fourth and remaining paragraphs cover substantially the same ground as the second, and are subject to the same rejoinder.

This question of rights and obligations was thoroughly threshed out in Liberty in the year 1887. Mr. Yarros was one of the principal threshers. I am convinced that nearly everything of value that can be said on the subject was said then, and it is not my intention to renew the controversy in these columns to any large extent. But I conceive that the present is an eminently fitting and becoming time to reproduce some parts of Mr. Yarros's contribution to that memorable discussion. My purpose is not to reproach Mr. Yarros with the revolution that has taken place in his opinions. It is the privilege of each to change his mind, and if today Mr. Yarros finds mental rest in the position which in 1887, when held by his old antagonist, J. M. L. Babcock, was the object of his contemptuous satire, I have no desire to disturb his peace of mind with unpleasant recollections. My purpose is altogether different. Just as it is only necessary, in order to controvert Mr. Spencer's latter-day views of the limits of the State, to print side by side with them his old chapter on "The Right to Ignore the State," so, to overthrow the Mr. Yarros of today, it is only necessary to confront him with the Mr. Yarros of 1887. The retrogression becomes as evident in the one case as in the other.

In the quotations which I shall make, the small capitals are my own. I begin with Mr. Yarros's article entitled "The Reasons Why," — an article which was always the object of my warmest admiration, and which I still think the best piece of work that Mr. Yarros has ever done. It is written in that marvellously clear style to which clear thought gives birth, and contrasts as pleasingly in form as in substance with his utterances on the same subject today.

I am an Egoist.

I recognize no authority save that of my own reason.

I regulate my life and my relations with the outside world in accordance with my understanding and natural instincts.

My sole object in life is to be happy, — I seek to avoid all pain and to gratify all my normal desires.

I cannot be happy unless I feel myself perfectly safe and secure in my possessions.

I can never be safe and free from fear of disturbance or injury until those around me are able to gratify all their normal desires, and they can never be completely happy without security.

Security can be only the result of perfect justice.

Justice consists in the recognition of equality and the rendering of equity.

Justice, thus defined, necessarily involves a condition of absolute liberty within its sphere.

Therefore, justice is *the* condition of my happiness as well as the happiness of all that are like me. That is to say, justice is the law of human society.

Thus I, an Egoist, RECOGNIZING NO RIGHTS AND NO DUTIES, become, solely and simply through prudence and a desire for security, a lover of equity, equality, and universal liberty.

But there is no credit due me for my policy. If I were strong, shrewd, and skilful enough to defy all danger; if my happiness could be achieved without the aid, cooperation, and respect of others, — I might have chosen to be a tyrant, and might have led a pleasant life, surrounded by two-legged beasts of burden. Not being superior to all creation, I involuntarily have to draw a line at men, and MAKE TERMS WITH THEM.

Having wisely decided to be a modest member of society, I have by no means irrevocably surrendered my freedom. I stay in it because, all things considered, it is best for me to submit rather than rebel, but I can, at any time, reconsider my course and, risking the consequences, make war upon society. WHO CAN SAY THAT I AM UNDER ANY OBLIGATION TO BE JUST? OBLIGATION? TO WHOM? TO WHAT?

The individual, once having entered the social compact, finds himself in the presence and under the influences of new impulses, new aspirations, new yearnings. He is changed, transformed, revolutionized. Social life becomes a necessity to him not as a condition, but as an element, of happiness; not as a means, but as an appreciable and weighty constituent of the desired end. He learns to know new joys and pleasures; his wants multiply; his tastes change; and he comes to feel and realize that he would never, even if he could, isolate himself from his fellow-men or try to reduce them to slavery.

This power of adaptation, or socialization, of the individual, though largely unconscious, can, nevertheless, be theoretically and objectively conceived and analyzed. In thought man can separate his Ego from the mass of humanity and discuss the wants, interests, and advantages of his person apart from it. He may not be able to effect such a separation in reality, but the illusion is so thorough that it must be discussed as if it were real.

I *imagine* I can leave society; I *think* I am free; therefore I *am* free. I feel no obligations and no duties. I act for the sake of immediate or prospective personal benefits, and obey the voice of prudence.

Am I unreliable? Quite the contrary. There would have been no confusion in our modern social relations if all men possessed these ideas, just as an isolated community of desperadoes would present an example of peaceful and harmonious relations. The whole mischief arises from the fact that so many build their castles in the air. Once plant yourself on solid ground, grasp and admit these fundamental realities, and you will logically and intelligently develop a principle of conduct which will make it possible for you to pronounce judgment on all things without tracing them back to first and bottom truths.

As Danton loved peace, but not the peace of slavery, so I love justice, but NOT THE JUSTICE OF MORALISM AND IDEALISM.

I supplement the foregoing with a few quotations from the articles written by Mr. Yarros in the controversy with Mr. Babcock which "The Reasons Why" called out.

Happiness is not a fixed quantity, and we cannot judge one man's conduct from the standpoint of another's conception of happiness.

. . . . . .

Just as long as the individuals surrounding me are deluded and befogged by ideas of duty and sacred rights, harmonious relations between us are rendered unattainable. I do *not* admit that justice and liberty are fundamental rights. I deny the existence of rights and duties. I recognize and deal with desires and necessities of individuals *only*. These desires and necessities bring social life into existence, and intelligence leads us gradually to the recognition of what we call justice as *the* condition calculated to maintain, foster, and improve our relations as social beings, as well as to secure and aid us in our pursuit of happiness as individuals. As long as some individuals, on the one hand, are free from superstition, and the masses, on the other, are prostrating themselves before the creations of their own foolish fancy, inequity, inequality, and despotism will prevail, the free and strong few taking advantage of the imbecility of the many. WHEN ALL BECOME "CONSCIENCELESS CRIMINALS," justice, or the recognition of equality and solidarity, will achieve her permanent and final triumph, — never to be disturbed unless the constitution and organization of man undergo a decided transformation.

. . . . . .

The truth that all men are Egoists once recognized, the question of a "common standard of action" settles itself very easily. No duties and no rights existing, everybody governs himself by his own appetite and understanding. Continual conflict, insecurity of life and possessions, and general confusion being the inevitable outcome of such a state of things, intelligent self-interest slowly but surely develops a common standard and brings about a conception of equal liberty and equitable dealing. The desire for order and security produces harmony and peace. WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FINDS PLEASURE IN VIOLATING SUCH COMMON STANDARDS, THERE IS NO REASON IN EXISTENCE FOR HIM TO DENY HIMSELF SUCH A PLEASURE. The consequences of his acts may help to clear up his ideas on the subject, and show him that he has a greater interest in maintaining the general harmony than he supposed he had. In the future he is more careful about his pleasures. But, APART FROM SELF-INTEREST, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO INDUCE

HIM TO SHOW ANY DEFERENCE FOR THE RULES OF CONDUCT WHICH OTHERS, BE THEY SMALL OR LARGE IN NUMBERS, ADOPT FOR THEMSELVES WITH A VIEW TO SECURE THEIR OWN WELFARE.

. . . . . .

Mr. Babcock confuses his thought by the persistent endeavor to make old theological terms voice new ideas and newly-reached conclusions. The Egoists pronounce such labor futile as well as wholly unnecessary, and REPUDIATE THE "BRAINLESS WORDS" ALONG WITH THE WORN-OUT FICTIONS WHICH THEY DENOTE.

After these quotations it is needless to answer Mr. Yarros. He answers himself. T.

Justice and Anarchism. — IV.

Passing over the right-of-property corollary, we come to the chapter dealing with patent and copyright. The subject has recently been treated in these columns so fully and exhaustively that no need of further argument can be felt by those interested in it. Mr. Spencer's defence of property in ideas in the present work is not much stronger than in "Social Statics," and his position is not much more tenable. I agree with him (as the reader is aware) that, "as a deduction from the fundamental principle of justice, copyright cannot be questioned with any show of reason"; but in this matter I am not entitled to speak for the Anarchistic school, since Mr. Tucker and other Anarchists claim to find in equal liberty a warrant for denying property in ideas. What, in my view, is Mr. Spencer's grave logical error will be found in his justification of the restriction of the right to property in ideas. Reiterating the argument advanced in "Social Statics," he says: "It is a truth made familiar by modern experience that discoveries and inventions, while in part results of individual genius, are in part results of pre-existing ideas and appliances. One of the implications, also made familiar by modern experience, is that about the period when one man makes a discovery or invents a machine, some other man, possessed of similar knowledge and prompted by a like imagination, is on the way to the same discovery or invention; and that within a moderate period this discovery or invention is tolerably certain to be made elsewhere, — possibly by more than one. A long-continued exclusive use of his invention would therefore be inconsistent with other equitable claims likely to arise; and hence there is need for a limitation of the period during which he may rightfully receive protection." For my part, I utterly fail to perceive the propriety of limiting in advance the originator's right to his product. Property in ideas once granted, the right to exclusive use of *his* idea by the author cannot rightly be abridged. Theoretically, the claim of a subsequently-appearing competitor cannot invalidate or affect in the slightest degree the title of the first author. Each is entitled to the exclusive use of his own product, each has the right to property in his idea. Practically their claims conflict, and they may be constrained to enter into some agreement with respect to their relation to the general public. Both parties to the contract naturally suffer a certain limitation of the practical right of exclusive use, though not of the abstract right. Whatever the dictates of expediency, there can be no doubt that, so far as the principle of equal liberty is concerned, the decision must be between perpetual and exclusive right of property in ideas (the right of each author to *his* idea), and absolute communism in the use and enjoyment of incorporeal property. Practical difficulties may necessitate a compromise such as is favored by those who desire to insure proper reward to the author for his labor and risk; but the compromise cannot be directly drawn from the principle of equal liberty.

The remaining corollaries drawn by Mr. Spencer do not seem to me to call for any especial comment, qualification, or criticism. I may conclude my review of "Justice" by a few random notes on various points scattered through its pages.

So anxious is Mr. Spencer to convince the reader that there is an abundance of induction to support the formula of justice that he is misled into introducing one or two pieces of evidence which, on examination, will be found to tell against him rather than in his favor, thus laying himself open to a charge of unfairness as well as superficiality. Observe, for instance, how political economy is made by Mr. Spencer to furnish inductive verification of the principle of equal liberty. In the first place, we learn that political economy supports the law of justice by teaching that "meddling with commerce by prohibitions and bounties are detrimental" as well as by insisting that "speculators should be allowed to operate on the food-markets as they see well." Alas, Mr. Spencer's wish is father to the thought. Political economy could with more propriety be described as approving of bounties and prohibitions, and as violently condemning speculators in staple products. The real truth is that political economy cannot fairly be cited on either side; and as to political economists, while they are hopelessly divided, the preponderance of opinion is against the position upheld by Mr. Spencer. In the second place, Mr. Spencer informs us that "one of the settled conclusions of political economy is that wages and prices cannot be artificially regulated with advantage." Even this is unfortunately not altogether correct. The old school did regard this as a settled conclusion, but the tendencies of "advanced" economists are so socialistic that little opposition to government regulation of wages and prices is to be expected from them. "On other questions," concludes Mr. Spencer, "such as the hurtfulness of tamperings with banking, the futility of endeavors to benefit one occupation at the expense of others, political economy reaches conclusions which ethics independently deduces." As to the last specification few economists indeed can be found on the right side, while the statement with regard to tamperings with banking is good enough for a joke. Here Mr. Spencer rises to a high pitch of unconscious humor. Why, the truth is that almost all the recognized economists acquiesce in the present policy of our governments and are wholly innocent of any appreciation or partiality for freedom in banking.

Again: while Mr. Spencer enforces the contention that the warrant for what are called rights is not derived from legality, but that, conversely, the law derives its warrant from them, he seeks to strengthen his position by pointing out that the corollaries which he draws from equal liberty "one and all coincide with ordinary ethical conceptions" and also correspond with legal enactments. That such inductive support of the abstract formula of justice is valuable, is not denied. But Mr. Spencer makes a statement which it is easy to disprove, and it is not wise to expose one's self to attack and to weaken a strong case by minor inaccuracies. It is far from true that the corollaries from equal liberty one and all correspond with legal enactments. Both in England and in this country there are laws against combinations of a legitimate character and laws against inoffensive acts. Tariff laws, banking monopoly laws, laws against gambling, and others too numerous to mention, show how little legality corresponds with justice. In fact two-thirds of the legislation of democratic countries will be found to be wrong. And as to current ethical conceptions, it needs but to recall the irrational opposition of moralists to lotteries, which they wish to see suppressed by law, to realize their confusion of thought. The ordinary moralist is never satisfied with justice. On the one hand he demands generosity, and on the other he justifies unmistakable aggression. The chaotic state of current ethical conceptions is sufficiently well known, and Mr. Spencer's averment is amazingly incorrect.

In the remarkable chapter dealing with the upholders of political empiricism who propose to be guided by "the merits of the case" and ridicule the faith in high general principles, Mr. Spencer utters a remark which seems to warrant the inference that he considers boycotting unjustifiable. He speaks of the ill-judged sympathy which led the public and police to tolerate the "violence" of the London dockers during their late strike, and points out the direct and indirect consequences of their "successful use of assaulting, bullying, and boycotting." It is difficult to believe that even Mr. Spencer glides into the common error of considering boycotting an infringement upon equal liberty, and yet his censure and his lumping together of "assaulting, bullying, and boycotting" are indicative of such an opinion. Now it certainly requires no formal syllogism to demonstrate that boycotting is entirely legitimate; and even bullying is not necessarily wrong. We have a right to threaten what we have a right to execute. We may not threaten to kill or to assault, but we may threaten to boycott.

It is a pleasure to record that Mr. Spencer has no sympathy with those who would restrain utterances which pass the limit of what the generality of men call decency or which are calculated to encourage sexual immorality. "In presence of the multitudinous differences of opinion found even among civilized peoples, it seems scarcely reasonable to take for granted that we alone are above criticism in our conceptions and practices, and unless we do this, restraints on free speech concerning the relations of the sexes may possibly be hindrances to something better and higher." V. Y.

I commend to the other readers of Liberty the following appreciative words in reference to the "Weekly Bulletin," written by Comrade Lewis Morris, of Palatka, Fla.: "You surely have made a lucky hit, not only for your own pecuniary interest, but also for the successful propaganda which you so ardently desire. The 'Bulletin' will doubtless be the first step leading many, now conservatives, in the direction of truth. While I could not probably procure in my neighborhood a single subscriber to Liberty, I believe, with a few sample copies of the 'Bulletin,' I might get perhaps a dozen for it. And it, once in the hands of a *littérateur*, must bring before him some thoughts new to a conservative. If you will send me a half dozen copies or more, I will see what I can do in this village and surrounding country. I am an unusually poor canvasser, but I can leave a copy of the paper on a gentleman's table and call afterwards and ask him if he wishes to subscribe for it."

A Life of War Upon Government.

[New York Sun.]

MOBILE, Sept. 2. — Bob Sims was born in North Carolina on Dec. 2, 1839. His proper name is Robert McMellan. His parents were farmers. He served four years in the Confederate army. For ten months he was a prisoner at Camp Morton, Ind.

At the close of the war Sims returned home and began farming in Choctaw county. He soon became a leader in the neighborhood, and took advantage of his influence to start his new religion. He called himself a disciple of Christ and a follower of the literal teachings of the Bible. He tried to follow those so closely that his life became a series of wild adventures. He was fined and imprisoned more than twenty times. His followers looked up to him as a second Saviour. The Simsites soon became the laughing stock of the country. If a man struck one of them, there would be no fight. The Simsite would simply turn the other cheek.

The Government and all its numerous officers were looked upon by the Simsites as robbers. Bob Sims's one idea was to "break the Government and the Constitution of the United States." He had a hard time of it, as is shown by his present predicament, — an outlaw in hiding with a price upon his head. Some seven years ago a somewhat similar case occurred, and Sims had to flee the country to save his life from a mob. When things quieted down, he returned, but built an almost inaccessible home in the mountains. The country was disturbed, however, and repeatedly a Simsite incurred the displeasure of the country thereabout. Now more than one thousand armed men from three counties have expelled the whole sect from Alabama.

Here are some of Bob Sims's peculiar views, expressed in his own language:

"You ask why I will not pay taxes; ask yourselves why you pay taxes. I do not owe any tax; to give something I do not owe is not a matter of debt. To take by force what I do not owe is robbery, and, as a just and brave man, I will not give to a robber in order to prevent his robbing me."

About five years ago Bob Sims began distilling liquors from fruits, and also made a little whisky from corn. For this he was fined and imprisoned, although he did not sell any of his products, merely giving it away to his friends. This is what he says on this question:

"In this robber's den, called courts of justice, he has robbers, extortioners, and wicked men promiscuously to judge, condemn, rob, and punish men for giving others drams. Anybody knows that for a poor man to do an act of kindness to his friend is not a crime, only that the robber has made it such to have a pretext to rob on. In this robbing pit the devil has his own law and God's law. By God's law the robbers are condemned, but by the robber's law the man that gave the drink of whisky is condemned. Now, if God's law ruled, the robbers would go into hell or pay the price of re-

demption; but, as the devil's law rules, his angels remain in heaven and the poor man goes into hell, or else he pays the robber the price of redemption. With this money in the robbers' pockets they are able to treat each other to better whisky than the poor robbed man gave to his friend.

"I am on the side of justice and freedom, and assert my right to freedom; hence I am now going to start a distillery and make whisky and rum, and sell and give it to men and boys or to anybody that wants it. It is my home right, a privilege given by Him who created me and my home and gave me a law. And for a set of thieves and robbers to renounce His law and violently deprive me of my home privilege is to make me their slave. He that will not stake his life for the word of God and for his own freedom is not worthy of God or freedom.

"The ground is mine, the corn and fruit which grow out of it by my labor are mine, and the whiskey which I make is mine. And shall I not do what I please with my own?

"To say that I shall not make whisky or sell or give a person a drink is to say I shall not have my freedom. There is no other principle upon which one set of men can deprive others of their own sacred home rights and freedom only that they have enslaved them. It would be more just and rational to say I shall not make sassafras tea or sell or give it away than to say I shall not make whisky or sell or give it away.

"If it is a crime to make and sell whisky, then why does your 'Christian Government' license a man or sell him a right for money to commit the crime? If it is not a crime, then why does your 'Christian Government' punish a man for that which is no crime, or prohibit it? And if it is a crime, does the buying of the right from another man make it any the less a crime?"

Some two months ago there came to Outlaw Bob, he said, a revelation from heaven. In this revelation he was commanded to begin distilling on a large scale in order to "break" the Government. His still is hidden near his mountain home. The officers have not succeeded in finding it. He made whisky and sold it right and left. The first United States Marshal, Padgett, who tried to arrest him failed. Bob seized his warrant as it was being read to him and tore it to pieces. Padgett went home without doing anything. The last arrest and escape were described a few days ago in the "Sun."

During the last two years Bob Sims has amassed a considerable fortune. Before that time he was comparatively poor. He used to take frequent trips to New York, Chicago, and Wisconsin. His brother Neil often accompanied him. About a year ago the part of the country in which the Simses lived was flooded with counterfeit money. Detectives were put on the matter, but nothing was discovered. It is said that Bob Sims circulated this money, and that he derived his wealth from his connection with counterfeiters in the North. His many trips to New York, Chicago, and other cities were no doubt made in connection with this business. The outlaw has the reputation of being the coolest man in the South.

A mob of neighbors who seven years ago drove Sims from his home intended to lynch him. Bob was standing at the foot of the tree. The rope was round his neck and hanging over a limb. The other end was in the hands of his enemies. He was ordered to prepare for death. He did so by making a speech in which he scared the mob so that they let him off, but bounded him out of the country. He told them that if they murdered him his spirit would haunt them, their families, and their homes forever. His body might die, he said, but his spirit would jump into some other body, and would be the curse of their existence. Bob is a forcible speaker, and when aroused he is like a glowing fire. His words were too strong for the ignorant men of his district.

In August, 1889, Sims started a monthly publication called "The Veil is Rent." It is a three-column folio, eight by fourteen inches. Sims purchased the type and a hand press, and his daughters learned typesetting. That they succeeded has been proven by the remarkable neatness of the publication. Many people thought it was printed in Chicago or New York. Sims's daughters and cousins, however, say that they did all the work themselves. Bob's utterances in this paper gathered round him the wrath of the country people. They called him "a reg'lar Anarchist."

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